IL FAIT AUSSI BEAU EN ARRIÈRE

FIFTY YEARS
OF STREET
PHOTOGRAPHY
1973-2023

HENRI HADIDA

Acknowledgements

The idea for this book has been ruminating in my thoughts for a long time. My decision to devote this book exclusively to street photography was the result of my numerous and insightful conversations with my son, Joseph.

Robert Del Tredici has had an immeasurable influence on my photographic journey. I want to thank him for continuing to be my teacher and mentor and more importantly, a lifelong friend. Our collaborations over the years have always inspired my creative endeavours.

More recently, Ben Welland has been a wonderful creative and technology resource. His straightforward opinions and warm-hearted banter keep me connected to a younger generation. His final review and digital tweaks to the photos in this book were crucial to its consistent feel. I owe him a debt of gratitude for inspiring me to break some dogmatic photographic rules and for his heartfelt foreword.

For more than fifty years, family and friends have encouraged me to keep doing what I love. I am so grateful for their continued support and presence at my various exhibitions over the years.

I wish I could have the same level of patience and understanding that my wife Rebecca has for my passion for photography. She is the most significant person in my life, and along with our children Melanie and Joseph, has kept me level-headed, inspired and challenged.

Finally, to those of you who helped coax this book into production, I thank you.

Note: This second edition is a self publication. I have added some commentary, page numbers, photo locations and dates.

Foreword

This book 'Il fait aussi beau en arrière' is Henri Hadida's life's work. This body of photographic works represents 50 years of Henri's photography, but that's not to say that he'll be putting down the camera anytime soon. If anything, I fully expect him to create another couple decades' worth of images just as strong as these ones and just as vital to his life's work as the photographs contained within these pages and publish a second edition of this book 20 years from now.

Photography is what keeps Henri young. Not just the taking of pictures, though. The talking about pictures as well, and indeed the learning about different ways to create pictures, too. He is forever a student of photography, and if you really wanna see his eyes light up, just get him talking about his number one passion in life. Or better yet, teach him something that you, yourself, know about photography.

By never feeling that he's finished learning, and by never creating photographs professionally — photographs that suit a client's needs, Henri has remained in a state of being both naïve to a certain degree about how to take photographs correctly (if there is such a thing), but also enthusiastic — enthusiastic to the point of delirium sometimes about the magic that happens through the pressing of the camera's shutter — dare I say the magic of the 'decisive moment' that has to occur in order for a photo to come into existence.

Since first picking up a camera as a young man and beginning to dabble in street photography, Henri has always considered himself a disciple of the trailblazing and iconic professional photographer, Henri Cartier-Bresson, but he's also always thought of himself as the product of his mentor, his friend, and his one-time photography teacher, Robert Del Tredici.

Henri strives to create photos that adhere to the photographic ethos of both of these incredibly influential photographers. Shoot from the hip if you have to. Never crop. Who cares if people sometimes look uncomfortable about being photographed? Shoot first, ask questions later.

But in the past 20 years, Henri has also looked to me as a mentor. I've been flattered by this, as I don't really view myself as an artist. Instead, I work as a photographer. I shoot portraits and weddings and corporate events. Henri often looks to me to instruct him on the rather exacting craftsmanship-type aspects of photography, but from time to time also asks me for my opinion on his photos. Indeed, in the creation process of this book, Henri allowed me to not only suggest visual ways for him to tie together the various eras of photos that would be represented here, but also to weigh in on which pictures I thought were his strongest.

I, myself, can't say that my photographic ethos always aligns with the street photographer's purist mentality. In conversations with Henri, I sometimes question the merits of some of his photographs, photographs that I don't find to be 'correct' enough. But in hearing Henri expound upon his very personal point of view, about just how he felt at the time in his life when he took some of these 'less than correct' photographs, I'm usually swayed. Henri will tell you that while walking the streets or while riding the bus wielding his camera, that that's him in his playground. Other people's reactions to him having a camera pointed at them don't need to always be positive. People can look pissed off. Life is messy. But look beyond what you immediately see in the forefront of the picture. Remember 'Il fait aussi beau en arrière'.

So, forget 'correct'. Let's talk about 'soul' instead. I can confidently say that Henri's street photos truly have more soul in them than most photographers are able to imbue into their pictures. And I think that may just be the product of Henri having this intense love for photography itself.

There's a beauty and a peace about these pictures. There's a sense that time is passing, much time, many decades in fact, but that despite the passage of time, humanity always remains the same. Henri's skill, nay Henri's superpower is his ability to show us this so succinctly.

I envy you, the viewer, for you are now about to be wowed and quite likely moved by the photography of my friend—a passionate street photographer and a passionate person: the 'other' Henri, Mr. Henri Hadida.

Ben Welland

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MIAMI BEACH 1977

MONTREAL 1975

MONTREAL 1978